GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:23
ANSWERED ON:22.11.2006
HAJ ARRANGEMENTS
Deora Shri Milind Murli

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the Minister for External Affairs paid a visit to Saudi Arabia in the first half of October 2006 to review the Haj arrangements for the Haj 2006 as reported in the Asian Age dated October 11, 2006;

(b) if so, whether the Minister met the Saudi Authorities of Haj Affairs for making forthcoming Haj pilgrimage smooth and hassle-free; and

(c) the number of pilgrims from India expected to undertake the pilgrimage in the coming year and the assistance likely to be provided to them?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) The Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri E. Ahamed paid a visit to Saudi Arabia between 11 to 15 October 2006 to review Haj arrangements for Haj 2006-II.

(b) The Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri E. Ahamed met the Advisor to H. M. the King to discuss various Haj related issues including request for increase of quota of pilgrims by 10,000.

(c) Around 1,57,000 pilgrims are likely to undertake the pilgrimage from India during the Haj 2006 − II.

The Government is making arrangements to facilitate the transportation to Saudi Arabia of the 110,000 pilgrims going through the Haj Committee of India and provision of accommodation and other logistical support for them. In addition to assistance to be provided by the Consulate General of India Jeddah, the Government is deploying 506 India-based officers including Doctors, Paramedics, Assistant Haj Officers and Haj Assistants in addition to around 600 locally recruited employees to look after the welfare of the pilgrims. 11 branch dispensaries and one hospital will be set up at Makkah to provide round the clock medical assistance to the pilgrims. Similarly, five branch dispensaries -cum-Haj offices and one main dispensary will be set up at Madina. During this year medicines worth Rs. 1.25 crores are being provided for the pilgrims.